

Message Text

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ACTION SCS-03

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SCA-01 EB-04 COME-00 AID-05

OES-03 DLOS-03 EUR-08 DOTE-00 CG-00 TRSE-00 FMC-01

JUSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /077 W

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P 212230Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5366

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: CGEN CO (USS VESSEL "OLYMPIC NAVIGATOR")

SUBJECT: STATUS OF VESSEL

REF STATE 228351 BOGOTA 8913

1. COMMANDER PAUL C NELSON USN EXECUTED SWORN AFFIDAVIT SETTING FORTH WHAT HE KNOWS CONCERNING CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING DEPARTURE OF VESSEL "OLYMPIC NAVIGATOR" FROM COLOMBIA. AFFIDAVIT IS BEING POUCHED TODAY TO SCS.

2. IN ESSENCE COMMANDER NELSON SAYS THAT INFORMATION IN HIS POSSESSION IS HEARSAY EVIDENCE OBTAINED DURING INVESTIGATION CONDUCTED JOINTLY BY HIMSELF AND BY THE COMMANDANT, COLOMBIAN NAVAL FORCES ATLANTIC, DURING LATTER PART OF AUG 74 CONCERNING DISAPPEARANCE OF MV OLYMPIC NAVIGATOR O/A AUG 24. COMMANDANT REQUESTED HIM TO ADVISE DEA BOGOTA OF DISAPPEARANCE OF VESSEL AND TO REQUEST INFORMATION FROM U.S. SOURCES WHETHER VESSEL HAD BEEN SIGHTED IN PUERTO RICAN WATERS IN ORDER ESTABLISH CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE OF DRUG RUNNING TO PR FROM COLOMBIA. CMR NELSON ADDS THAT VESSEL WAS SUBCONTRACTED TO VIKINGOS FISHING

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INDUSTRY, CARTAGENA BY ONE JOHN P VALASSAKIS AND HAD

SAILED ON ROUTINE FISHING SORTIE WITH VIKINGO FLEET AUG 21/74 THAT VESSEL LAST SEEN IN COMPANY FISHING FLEET OF GUAJIRA COAST AUG 24 WHEN DEPARTED AREA ADVISING SHE WAS BOUND FOR SANTA MARTA OSTENSIBLY TO OBTAIN REPAIR PARTS. VESSEL NOT ARRIVED SANTA MARTA AND ATTEMPTS BY VIKINGOS TO LOCATE CRAFT, INCLUDING AIR SEARCH, PROVED FUTILE. REPORT CONTINUES SAYING THE VESSEL WAS APPARENTLY UNDER COMMAND OF ONE PEDRO WALTER VIERA A URUGUAYAN WITH QUESTIONABLE PAST HISTORY WHO WAS LISTED ON MANIFEST AS CREW MEMBER. THE MASTER, CELSO ALVAREZ, DID NOT SAIL ABOARD VESSEL ON AUG 21 ALVAREZ PRESENTED HIMSELF AT VIKINGOS O/A AUG 24. HIS REASONS FOR NOT BEING ON BOARD HIS SHIP WERE VAGUE. HE IS BELIEVED TO BE UNDER THREAT NOT TO TELL ALL HE KNOWS.

3. COMMANDER NELSON COMPLETES STATEMENT BY SAYING IT IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE IN CARTAGENA THAT FISHING CRAFTS HAVE MADE CONTRABAND RUNS TO PUERTO RICO DURING FISHING OPERATIONS ALONG COLOMBIAN COAST, RETURNING WITH FISHING FLEET TO HOMEPORT.

4. COMMANDER NELSON DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT PRESIDENT OF VIKINGOS AND CAPT ALVAREZ WOULD VOLUNTARILY MAKE DESPOSITION FURNISHING INFORMATION ALL THEY KNOW ABOUT THIS CASE.

5. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION THAT DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE ON STATUS OF COLOMBIAN CREW MEMBERS, AS REQUESTED REFTEL B. VAKY

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